



## MILPITAS ETHICS PROGRAM CORE CONCEPTS

In conducting training for Council, Commissioners, Senior Staff, and Candidates the following are core concepts to communicate about the **Code of Ethics**:

1. **Its Purpose:** to foster public trust and public confidence by promoting and maintaining the highest standards of conduct by the Council, Commissions, City Management, Senior City Staff, and candidates for Council.
2. **Its Challenge:** for the Council and all leaders in the City to practice the Code so well that they become credible role models, people worthy of imitation.
3. **Its Standards:** *The Code* names six preferred core values (listed below). For each, the Code includes a representative set of **role model behaviors** a person would display if they were practicing that value in their work. *The Behavioral Standards* translates those role model behaviors into a more specific set of positive behaviors City officials might engage in to build public trust. It also includes a representative set of negative behaviors that damage public trust and are usually the result of falling over some common stumbling block.
4. **Core values** are deeply-held beliefs that influence people's attitudes and decisions. Values can be personal or organizational. Milpitas identified its City values so that individuals and groups could use these as preferred guidelines for decision-making, instead of relying only on the vast array of personal values individuals bring with them when they come to work.
5. **Ethics** are a set of well-grounded standards for how individuals and groups **ought** to treat one other and the physical world around us.
6. **At-our-best behaviors** were identified during a four-month long public process involving City Council, Commission representatives, City Management and Senior Staff, and the public at large. This group reached consensus that these six values answer the fundamental question that started the Ethics Code Development Process: *What values describe public officials when they are **at their best** in their treatment of citizens and each other?*
7. **Moral obligations of the Code:** the six core values and the role model behaviors are not just "at our best behaviors," but are so fundamental to public trust and public confidence that the Council has imposed an ethical obligation on individuals and groups to act according to the Code everyday.
8. **Bottom line: promise and expectation:** Public officials in Milpitas *promise* residents of the City that this is how they will behave in serving the City. Residents may legitimately *expect* public officials and City staff to fulfill their promises. Voters hold Council accountable in the ballot box when they cast their votes.